Nation

Volume 22, No. 12 • April 17, 2015

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Why Bill C-51 is a threat to Aboriginal rights

by Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come

In January, the federal government tabled Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015. The bill has generated widespread uncertainty and concern. It fails to safeguard the dignity, human rights and security of Indigenous peoples and individuals. It is inconsistent with good governance.

The bill would allow federal judges to grant Canada's spy agency, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), the right to violate any law of Canada, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Such permission would be granted in a secret hearing with no appeal. Only the government side would be represented.

The bill contemplates the global sharing of information obtained by CSIS, which may or may not be accurate. International human rights law is not considered. This directly contradicts Canada's international commitments. Last December, the UN General Assembly affirmed by consensus that states must ensure that "any measure taken to combat terrorism complies with all their obligations under international law … in particular … human rights."

Disputes relating to Indigenous peoples should not be criminalized, especially through anti-terrorism legislation. Indigenous peoples are human rights defenders and our issues often include environmental, natural resource development and other essential concerns. For example, in Quebec, the James Bay Crees continue to oppose uranium mining, but such democratic protest is fully accepted by the provincial government. We are not being criminalized or spied upon. Bill C-51 could change this.

Important lessons on "security" can be learned from Canada's history. The security and human rights of Indigenous peoples have been, and continue to be, severely impacted by non-Indigenous governments and other third parties. A non-discriminatory approach would require that the "security of Canada" be inclusive of all peoples, including Indigenous peoples.

Security is a human right. This right of Indigenous peoples includes: environmental security; food security; economic security; social security; cultural security; human security; and territorial security. The 2003 Declaration on Security in the Americas affirms: "the traditional concept and approach must be expanded to encompass new and non-traditional threats, which include political, economic, social, health, and environmental aspects."

Environmental, cultural and other dimensions of security are reflected in the landmark ruling of the Supreme Court in Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia. The Court emphasized the fiduciary duty of the Crown and added: "... incursions on Aboriginal title cannot be justified if they would substantially deprive future generations of the benefit of the land." This has far-reaching implications for the security of Indigenous peoples, particularly in the contexts of resource development and climate change.

In the past nine months, the federal government has not publicly acknowledged the Indigenous victory in Tsilhqot'in Nation. Bill C-51 fails to consider "security" from the perspectives and inherent human rights of Indigenous peoples. The rights, security and well-being of present and future generations of Indigenous peoples must be ensured.

Since its election in 2006, the federal government has refused to acknowledge within Canada that Indigenous peoples' collective rights are human rights. In November 2010, Canada endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The federal government concluded: "We are now confident that Canada can interpret the principles expressed in the Declaration in a manner that is consistent with our Constitution and legal framework."

The Declaration is a consensus, universal international instrument. No country in the world formally objects to it. The Declaration applies to all Indigenous peoples globally. It promotes harmonious and co-operative relations between states and Indigenous peoples. It affirms our right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and our right to our lands, territories and resources.

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Mary and Abel Swallow

photo by: Akiva Levitas

April fools no one

by Sonny Orr

As an avid jokester with many decades of experience, I have learned to finesse the dark arts of the April Fool's prank. Despite years of efforts, I have yet to be caught unaware, for I am extra leery of anything on that day.

Yes, it is an all-day affair, though some insist it should be limited to the morning hours. Contrary to many people's perspectives of the annual event whose shame endures in everlasting embarrassment, there are some jokes that do fail. I, sorrowfully so, have yet to feel that painful reminder of how gullible I am, leading to devious plans of revenge developed over months of silent agony suffered by my many victims.

I haven't yet had my hand stuck to the door handle with Krazy Glue. Nor has a can of paint fallen on my head. I haven't been too gullible to believe I had a million-dollar ticket in a fake lottery or set-up-to-win bingo game.

I can say that April lamesters who lie about the car being trashed or those who insist "it's going to rain today so wear something waterproof" have ever even raised my eyebrow a micro-millimetre. It's good to feel happy that the brunt of the joke usually almost always fell on the guy next to me as I realize that something is up before they do. Nope, nobody has ever caught me short on scepticism.

However, I did raise a few voices in excited belief when I mentioned that I won $10,000 at a lottery terminal in a downtown bar before letting loose with a gleeful April Fool! It's just believable enough to seem true. It's the fine balance that really does the trick to making tricks. When a gullible sucker bites the bait, reeling him in is pure joy.

Then there's the physical joke, which is best when recorded for posterity to forever torment your victim. A classic is the saran wrap across the doorway before calling out, "Soup's up!" Higher up the fool food chain is the python borrowed from the zoo and left in the bed or the less-traumatizing tarantula on the bookshelf scare. It does get funny like that, until you have to call the ambulance because the hapless victim was your granny.

My favourite animal joke was a long-in-the-planning prank that my uncle played on his brother. While setting snares for rabbits one winter, my uncle convinced my cousins and I to collect the little rabbit shits lying around. These he kept in the freezer until he carefully sewed them together into a cool beaded necklace. This was carefully put in a fancy box that he presented it to his brother on that fateful day.

The oohs and aahs about the beauty of the necklace were soon replaced with WTH! (We used the term Hell in those days.) Closer examination by my unsuspecting uncle produced the biggest WTH of all. The prankster giggled and opened a barrel of laughs from the rest of us who were in on the jewellery joke. The rest is history.

However, I think that Mother Nature has pulled the biggest joke of all this year, turning April into just another month of winter. The expectation of warm weather prods us into buying summer tires and spring jackets with plans of sidewalk shopping or uneventful car trips. Then she piles more winter on us. Even I was fooled by this one. Finally.

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Eeyou Istchee grieves

A solemn ceremony for five victims of Lake Bussy cabin fire

by Joshua Grant

It has been a difficult couple of weeks for the people of Eeyou Istchee. The death of five young men in a tragic fire at a hunting cabin in Lake Bussy, 200 kilometres north of Mistissini, is a devastating loss for the people of the Cree Nation.

Fathers, sons, brothers and friends, Emmett Coonishish, Chiiwetin Coonishish, Charlie Gunner, Kevin Loon and David Jimikin were loved and respected by the community of Mistissini. On Tuesday, April 7, family members and friends travelled to the scene of the tragedy to commemorate their lives, before returning to a sombre, supportive welcome in Mistissini.

The five Mistissini residents were on a hunting trip at the end of March and expected to return to the community March 30, according to an interview on Cree Radio with Chief Richard Shecapio. When their families and friends still hadn't heard from them by April 1, pilot Philip Petawabano of Waasheshkun Airways was asked to investigate.

Upon arriving at Bussy Lake, Petawabano discovered that the cabin had burnt to the ground and immediately notified regional police. The Sûreté du Québec was also called in April 1 and the following day it was confirmed that five bodies had been recovered from the scene.

While the fire is believed to have been accidental, the investigation is still underway to determine both the cause and the date it occurred. Bodies recovered at the site were sent to Montreal for autopsies to confirm the identities of the victims.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come released a statement in the wake of the news:

"We were shocked and devastated to learn about the tragic accident resulting in the loss of five of our Cree youth…. On behalf of the entire Cree Nation, I extend our deepest condolences to the families and to the community of Mistissini who must all now find a source of compassion and strength to endure this terrible tragedy and to support one another in a journey of healing. At a time of such unfathomable loss we can only express our deepest sympathies to the families and pray that the knowledge of the full support of the entire Cree Nation will help in some way providing comfort and easing the terrible pain they are suffering."

The Grand Chief emphasized the fact that the loss of life affects Eeyou Istchee as a whole. He stressed the importance of remembering the positive impact all five men had in their community.

"Their loss is a loss for the Cree Nation and we mourn with them…. May their memories be a blessing and a source of sustenance as we collectively come to terms with this frightful occurrence."

The nature of the incident and the age of the victims make this type of tragedy that much harder to process. These five young men were hockey players, police officers, truckers and maintenance workers, who all loved the outdoors, loved to hunt and fish, and were active and involved in their community.

Speaking with the James Bay Cree Communications Society, Chief Shecapio discussed both the emotional and technical details of the tragedy, identifying the young men who perished in the fire as well as their surviving parents and providing details on how the investigation is proceeding.

"…Emmett Coonishish, son of Alfred and Hattie Coonishish, David Jimikin, son of Robert and Caroline Jimikin, Charlie Gunner, son of Cathleen and Jimmy Gunner, Kevin Loon, son of Jane Loon, Chiiwetin Coonishish, son of Jason and Rachel Coonishish." Shecapio related, the emotion in his voice readily apparent.

Families flying to Lac Bussey to the site of the cabin fire.

Shecapio noted that funeral arrangements have not yet been made as family members are awaiting confirmation of the autopsy reports from Montreal. A team from the SQ major crimes unit is working on the case and further details regarding the incident will be released in the next few days.

One can only imagine what the families of these five men are going through, coping with the unexpected loss of loved ones at such a young age. Our deepest sympathies and condolences go to the Coonishish, Jimikin, Gunner and Loon families. Take comfort in knowing that the entire Cree community stands with you in your time of mourning and in commemorating all that Emmett, Chiiwetin, Charlie, Kevin and David contributed to Eeyou Istchee while they were still with us.

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Reaching out in tragedy

Members of Cree Nation express their condolences

by Amy German

They were plucked from the land in their youth.

On April 2, it was discovered that five hunters from Mistissini – David Jimikin, Emmett Coonishish, Chiiwetin Coonishish, Kevin Loon and Charlie Gunner – had perished in a tragic hunting cabin fire near Lake Bussy.

The loss, described as "unfathomable" in a statement by Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, has sparked an outpouring of emotion from families and the community.

Members of the Cree Nation have reached out to share their grief, condolences and heartfelt thoughts with those suffering from this loss.

***

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director and all our staff, I would like to express our deepest condolences to the Cree Nation of Mistissini and the families of the victims of the Lake Bussy fire. It's impossible to express how deeply we grieve for these young men. There are many, many members of the Cree Health Board family who are personally touched by this tragedy.

At this time we should all be vigilant and ensure that the people around us who are emotionally vulnerable feel loved and protected.

Bella Moses Petawabano
Chair, Board of Directors
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

***

Working at the clinic over so many years, at some point we meet everyone and their families. We have a chance to share many things with those we meet. Today we share a profound sadness.

I sit here thinking of the five men we have lost. I sit here thinking of their families. Some I worked with. Some were friends and some were like young cousins. It is hard to understand or accept that, so suddenly, they are gone.

I try to imagine the shock of their families at this tragic loss. During moments of disbelief and sadness, I also think of the smiles, jokes and happiness they brought to us. I realize the positive impact they had on so many of us, and our fortune that they were in our lives.

These memories are something for us to cherish and hold on to as we work through our grief.

Deepest condolences to the families of our five brothers, friends, husbands and fathers. Please know that we share your loss, and that we are here with you and for you.

On behalf of members of the Mistissini clinic,
Dr. Kavi

***

I just want to say to all the families that I'm very, very sorry for your loss. My heart breaks for you all. I pray for the families every night before bed and every morning when I wake up. I went to church and asked for prayers for the families. You are always in my thoughts. May God bless the families and be with you on your healing journey.

Candace Debassige

***

Our heartfelt condolences to the people of Mistissini.

"Even though I walk through the darkest valley...God, you are with me." Psalm 23:4 (NIV)

With love and prayers.

Dennis and Barbara Gilpin, Waskaganish

***

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The Department of Justice and Correctional Services of the Cree Nation Government sends its sincere condolences to family, friends, colleagues and community members of those lost in the tragic hunting incident near the Cree Nation of Mistissini. Our thoughts and prayers are with all.

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We, the physicians, dentists and pharmacists who work in Eeyou Istchee, would like to express our sincerest sympathies to the families, friends and community members of Mistissini and the Cree Nation, touched by the recent sudden and tragic loss of your precious loved ones. We cannot imagine the grief and pain that you are now enduring, but know that we grieve with you.

We realize and witness that Cree families, communities and the Cree Nation have the love, strength and resilience to overcome grief over time and begin healing together. Our physicians remain available to support and counsel you whenever needed, over the coming months.

On behalf of the Council of Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists (CPDP) of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB),

Dr. Darlene Kitty, President, Council of Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists, Region 18.

Dr. Laurent Marcoux, Director of Medical Affairs and Services

Dr. Carole Laforest, Head, Regional Department of Medicine

***

Our hearts are saddened by your loss and our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Katherine Morrow, Iain Cook, Sacha Cook

***

Message of condolences on behalf of Anne Foro, the director of planning and programming for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay on behalf of her department and team:

To the Cree Nation and to our colleagues Jason Coonishish, Jeanette Loon and Maria MacLeod

Death, we all know is the final destination for everyone, but when some of us leave in that way, the words are hard to found to express our sadness. This is a big loss for the Cree Nation. On behalf of the department team, I am presenting our condolences to the community of Mistissini.

Jason, Jeanette and Maria, you are our closest coworkers, and it is with a heavy heart that we are sending you all deepest sympathy on the loss of your family members.

***

My personal words, as your supervisor, are: death cannot have the last word. As the African poet Birago Diop wrote, "the dead are not dead…they are in the trembling of the trees, in the groaning of the woods, in the water that runs…." This is to remind you that your love ones will be watching over you. Resilience is very Cree and this is a great value that will help you go over the mourning.

Anne Foro

Director of Planning & Programming

Cree Board of Health & Social Services of James Bay

***

Our hearts go out to all the people touched by the tragic loss of five community members. We mourn with the Cree Nation.

Dr. Toby Fainsilber, Dr. Barry Fine, Dr. Fhameeda Adam. Dr. Nicole Seben, Dr. Erin Sandiland, Dr. Tamara Fitch, Waswanipi

***

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

All my love and sympathy to you, your families and our communities in this difficult time.

With deepest condolences,

Kianoush Dehghani

***

On behalf of the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association Board of Directors and staff, we join all of you in your sorrow. We wish you peace and healing and sending you a hug and love through this note. Special thoughts and heartfelt prayers are with you and your family during this time of sorrow.

E. Virginia Wabano

President

***

Our hearts go out to all the families and friends affected by this tragedy. It was something we are never prepared for that affects us all deeply. I knew the young men and feel the loss as many do. For once I am at a loss to find the right words but send my prayers and those of all the staff here at the Nation and Beesum Communications.

Will Nicholls

Editor-in-Chief

Niko Trapper shines in bantam hockey

Niko Trapper, a 14-year-old former Mistissini resident, was recently selected as Rookie of the Year in the Bantam CC division in Saguenay. Nominated by coaches of the Ambassadeurs de Chibougamau, a league committee voted Trapper as the number one rookie in his league.

Trapper accepted the honour at an awards gala in early March. Trapper mentioned that he is very grateful for the support of his mother, brothers and cousins and appreciates the fact that he is able to live with his family while playing hockey in Chibougamau.

After losing his father at a young age and moving from Mistissini to Chibougamau, Trapper underwent a transition period that forced him to leave Quebec's child hockey development program. He didn't get back on the ice until he was nine, when he joined a Novice single A team.

Since then, Trapper has quickly progressed on the ice. Earning rookie of the year in a competitive division shows that his hard work and dedication is starting to pay off.

Nutrition North Canada appoints First Nations expert

Nutrition North Canada (NNC) has appointed a new member to its advisory board.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Bernard Valcourt appointed Tracy Rispin to the NNC Advisory Board March 27. The minister cited Rispin's "extensive knowledge of First Nations issues," along with her desire to help meet the specific needs of Northern communities.

Goose Call contest WINNER!

Sidney Weapenicappo and his grandson

The winner of this year's Goose Call contest is **Sidney Weapenicappo**.

Congratulations to Sidney on his brand new Goose Call from Recall Designs. Thank you to all those who participated and good luck to all hunters this Goose Break!

Keep an eye out for upcoming contests in *The Nation*.

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According to her biography posted on the NNC's website, Rispin is a heritage interpreter of the Yukon's Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. She also served as the community's Deputy Chief. Her biography states that in addition to holding a number of heritage and cultural positions over the course of her career, Rispin has work experience related to resource management and finance and is an independent filmmaker.

The NNC was formed in 2011 with funding from the Canadian government as part of its Northern Strategy; a four-pronged approach whose primary objectives are listed on their website as: Exercising Canada's sovereignty over its Arctic territories; conserving northern ecosystems and species; promoting economic and social development amongst Northern communities; and "devolving" governance to provide more autonomy to the territories, especially concerning the management land and resources.

NNC is a government-subsidized program, which functions under the supervision of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), to provide Northern communities with increased access to various perishable food items from the southern regions of the country (such as eggs, beef, milk, fruit and vegetables), as well as increasing access to traditional Arctic food sources such as Arctic char and caribou.

Last month, Dennis Bevington, the NDP MP for the Northwest Territories, proposed a series of changes that would help ensure that the food subsidy reaches communities as intended. He also demanded greater transparency and alterations to eligibility criteria for communities based on "real circumstances." These demands were followed by an announcement from the federal government that all Nutrition North retailers must make their profit margin data available to independent auditors to verify they are passing the subsidy on to their customers in full. The NNC Advisory Board also said it plans to further address the issue by demanding that all store proprietors receiving subsidized goods issue savings receipts to their customers at point of sale.

According to results published on the government's website, by March 2014, three years after the founding of the NNC, the average price for a food basket for a family of four had fallen by more than 7%, which was calculated to represent a total savings of $137 per month. Further, the website reported increases in the gross weight of "eligible food items being shipped to northern isolated communities of approximately 25%."

NNC has received close to $60 million in base funding each year since 2011, with funding increasing each year in order to keep pace with growing demand. For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, NNC will receive a food subsidy budget of $68.5 million.

The land provides in many ways

Stornoway opens the Swallow Airport at the Renard mine

Story and photos by Akiva Levitas

It was a brisk cool morning when our plane landed at the Renard mine for the inauguration of the Clarence and Abel Swallow Airport on March 25. As we made our way into the building, Swallow family members gathered to look at photographs covering the history of this land and of the Swallow family.

With the room filled with four generations of Swallows, the ribbon-cutting ceremony began with the unveiling of a commissioned portrait of Clarence and Abel Swallow, the original tallymen of the area.

"Literally thousands of people will come through here and the first thing they see will be the Clarence and Abel Swallow Airport."

"This airport will be here a long time," said Matt Manson, CEO of Stornoway Diamond Corporation. "Literally thousands of people will come through here and the first thing they see will be the Clarence and Abel Swallow Airport, the photos on the wall, and the words of Abel after the Mecheshoo Agreement was signed [in March 2012]."

With close to 70% of the mineworkers coming from Mistissini, the new airport will serve as the bridge to bring two worlds closer. Many of those working in the mine are members of the Swallow family who have taken a proactive role in the development of the site.

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Prospectors category:

One prize of $2,000

The Cree Mineral Exploration Board's Rock Competition to reward new mineral discoveries in Eeyou Istchee

Requirements:
- New discovery
- Sample must be the size of a fist
- Sample must be located on a map
- Complete the application form

Deadline and shipping:
- CMEB assumes the analysis expenses of the participating samples
- The contest ends on October 31
- Shipping is at participant's expense

Don't forget:
- Hints on the ground: look for rusty surfaces
- Hints after breaking: sample metallic minerals

NAME _____
PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____
COMMUNITY _____

SAMPLE COLLECTED FROM
❑ Shore Line ❑ Island ❑ Stream Bank ❑ River Bank
❑ Lake Side ❑ Mountain ❑ Other

SAMPLE LOCATION PLACE NAME _____
MAP _____
GPS COORDINATES _____ E _____ N

SIGNATURE _____

Coordinates: 16 Beaver Road, Box 210, Wemindji, QC, Canada J0M 1L0
Tel: 819-978-0264 ext. 327 Fax: 819-978-3834 E-mail: youceflarbi@creenet.com

Stornoway is focused on transparency in its relations with stakeholders and local communities. But the company is also committed to a graceful restoration of the land to its original condition once the mine is exhausted.

"I don't know if you've noticed but there is a ditch surrounding the entire mine site," vice-president of public affairs Ghislain Poirier said. "We're the first mine in Canada that employs this technique in order to ensure all water in contact with the mine is recovered and treated."

However, the impact is not only environmental, as Manson elaborated through a discussion he had with Grand Chief Mathew Coon Come. Manson started by saying how the mine will have low impact environmentally, but Coon Come interrupted him to say, "Everything you do has an impact on us. Providing jobs changes the dynamics in families, the creation of wealth in communities, and the disturbance of migratory patterns. Everything you do has an impact."

Manson said he took those words to heart and incorporated them into the ethos of how Stornoway handles the way it conducts business.

With lots of laughs and the presenting of gifts, it was clear from the interaction between the family and Stornoway that their relationship was one of mutual benefit that met the needs of both parties. With Emerson Swallow as his translator, Abel spoke about the difficult times when all that he had to help take care of his family came from the land. Now he was happy to see many family members able to provide for themselves thanks to the work on the mine. "There were many moments when it seemed that times were tough, but you have to keep trying and do what you need to do, that's how I look at it," said Abel.

In the end, the land is still being used as a means to provide for the Swallow family. But Abel Swallow said it is time for Stornoway to help provide for them through the land. With an expected production life of at least 20 years, the Renard mine and Stornoway will help to provide for many more generations of Swallows.

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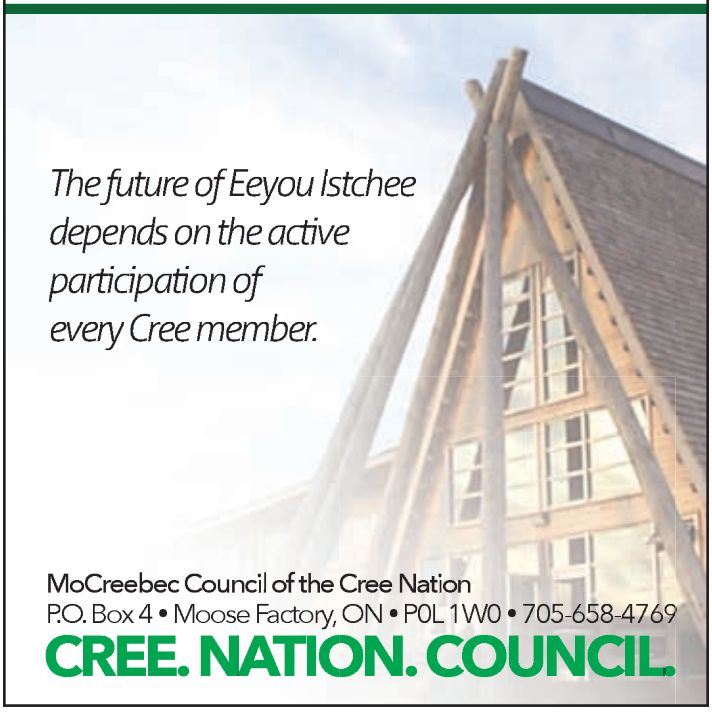

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Growing green

The Chisasibi Community Greenhouse Project close to sprouting

by Amy German

If the necessary funding comes through, construction of the Chisasibi Community Greenhouse Project may start as early as next year.

According to project coordinator Diane Croteau, the greenhouse has been in discussion for the last six years. But it wasn't until two years ago that a solid plan came together to seek funding for the project.

Croteau said the Victoriaville-based Centre of Social Innovation in Agriculture hired her to oversee the project. CSIA was mandated to conduct a feasibility study to ensure that the needs of the community were met while accommodating Chisasibi's climate.

"We wanted to come up with something that is up to standard and where we could conduct research as this could be a model for the north and other communities," said Croteau.

The project has seed money from the Cree Alliance for Solidarity, the Cree Social Economy Regional Table and the Eeyou Istchee Social Economy Fund. However, the estimated price tag has not been announced and full funding is not yet in place. This is what Croteau will now focus on.

Taking into consideration the realities of creating a greenhouse project this far north as well as the desires of the community, a first draft of the feasibility study has now completed and Croteau said the project is looking quite promising.

"We are pushing for energy efficiency. It's something that may be implemented in other communities which may not have easy

Have a safe and enjoyable Goose Break.

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The Cree School Board would like to wish everyone an enjoyable cultural break with family and friends this Spring!

The Chairperson and Council of Commissioners,
Director General and Senior Directors of Cree School Board.

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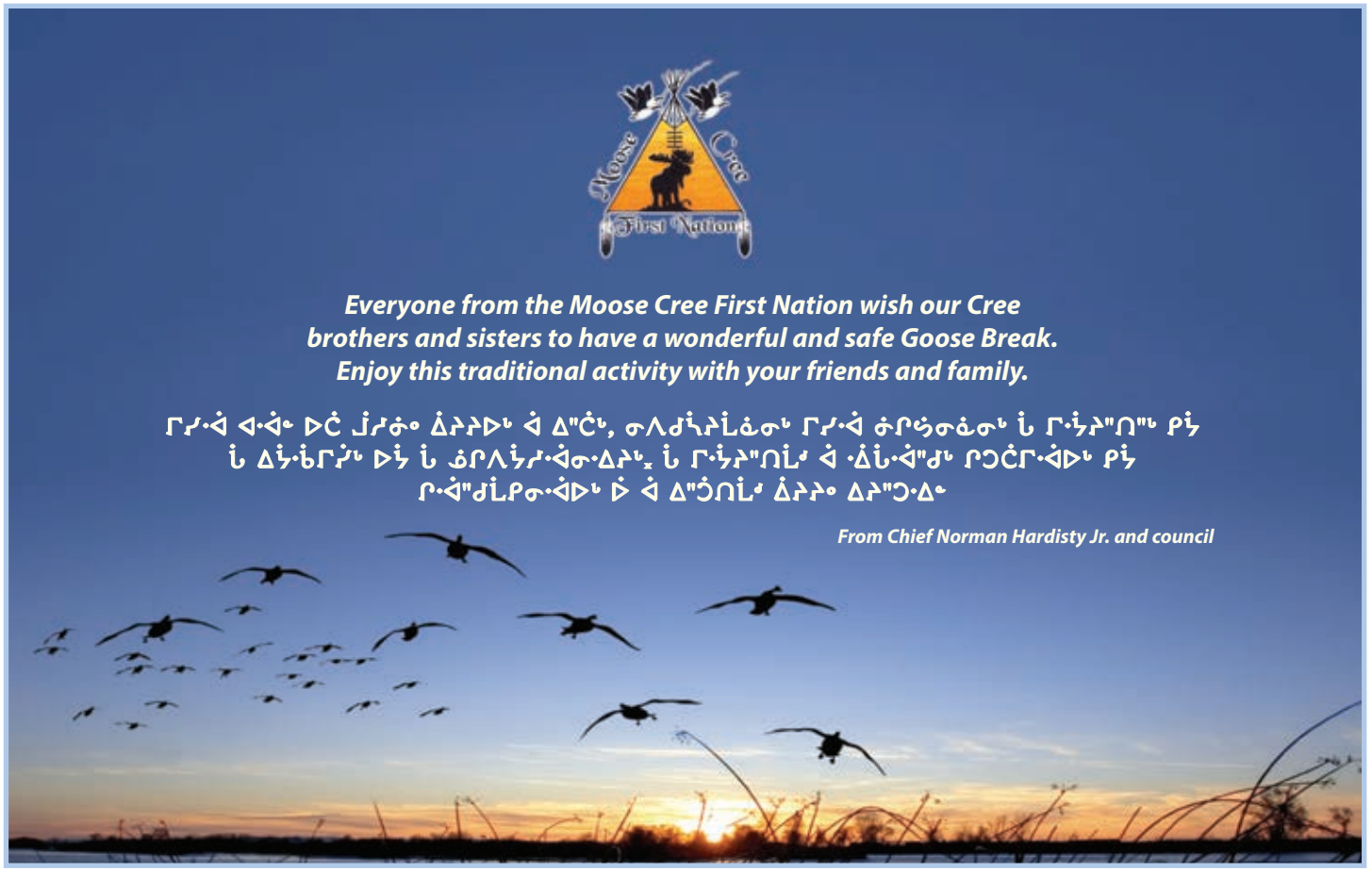

Everyone from the Moose Cree First Nation wish our Cree brothers and sisters to have a wonderful and safe Goose Break. Enjoy this traditional activity with your friends and family.

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From Chief Norman Hardisty Jr. and council

access to affordable energy," said Croteau.

The project is being designed to use hydroelectric power and will recycle energy so that the greenhouse is as efficient as possible.

With this in mind however, Croteau said the project would likely only run 10 months out of the year; January and February may be too cold for the greenhouse to be fully operational. At the same time, she said this is yet to be set in stone as some of the educational projects that are planned for the project may actually run year-round.

Chisasibi isn't the only Cree community with a greenhouse project. Unlike the off-grid mega greenhouse project in Whapmagoostui announced last November, Chisasibi's only clients will be local.

Whapmagoostui's biomass-powered greenhouses will not only be producing for the locals but will also sell to northern mining camps and other communities.

"One of our first priorities will be to provide the community's institutions with fresh vegetables and this is something that the community is already responding to," said Croteau. "We are going to grow vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers and romaine lettuce as well as some traditional herbs and medicinal plants for educational purposes. We wanted to add peppers, but growing them is really hard in a greenhouse."

Croteau said the local hospital and daycares are priorities for fresh produce and that the goods would also be sold in the local stores. The goal is affordable pricing with the profits going back into the project.

A committee will be set up to assess the community's needs and to ensure the community can manage on its own.

With this in mind, the project's design will not be using the high-end type of technology used in the larger greenhouse projects, like the famed Lufa Farms' rooftop facility in Montreal. Chisasibi rooftops are not able to support this technology, and if something were to break down, the community would not have the means to get it fixed.

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~ Robbie Tapiatic,
Niskamoon Remedial Works Director

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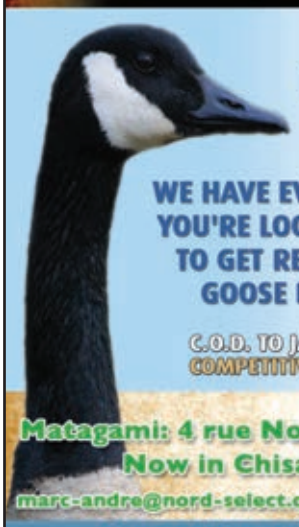

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“The idea of having more independence with this has also taken off. People want fresh food as it has more nutrients.”

Instead, what is being proposed is simple, durable and sustainable. Croteau said they are looking to train several individuals for part-time work at the facility so that there is always someone around who could manage the community’s crops.

“We want to make sure that this is accessible to the community and to do so is to make sure that there is a workforce for this. That is part of the next phase. There will be training down south as well as people who will come up to do on-site training. We need to train a bunch of people so we are not dependent on just one person,” said Croteau.

Besides the indoor greenhouse gardens, Croteau said the project is also looking at creating a collective garden outside of the greenhouse facility where local families could grow and harvest their own food.

While Chisasibi may not be known for agriculture, Croteau said it wouldn’t be a first as there was, at one time, a farm on Fort George and root vegetables have been known to grow quite well in the region.

Croteau said there is a lot of enthusiasm for the project since many locals are trying to eat healthier. Locally grown produce is key.

“The idea of having more independence with this has also taken off. People want fresh food as it has more nutrients,” said Croteau.

Another plan is to teach children about agriculture. To this end, the Quebec-based non-profit organization, Jeunes Pousse, held workshops for day-care children last November.

According to Croteau, the children got an up-close look at greenhouse-grown sunflowers to get an understanding of how plants are grown and what they taste like.

“We are going to do another activity with these kids this summer that is also parallel to the greenhouses by building small gardens in their yards,” Croteau noted. “This way the kids will get to tend to their gardens and learn from that.”

Once the greenhouses are completely built, they will be something that all of the schools will be able to use as teaching tools and have room dedicated to educational projects.

At this point, Croteau said staff would be hired to coordinate the project while she focuses on fundraising and developing a business plan. If all goes well, construction will start as early as next year.

In the meantime, there is a plan in place to begin composting this summer to stockpile ample fertilizer for the greenhouse.

Keep the culture alive! Have a wonderful Goose Break!

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Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged

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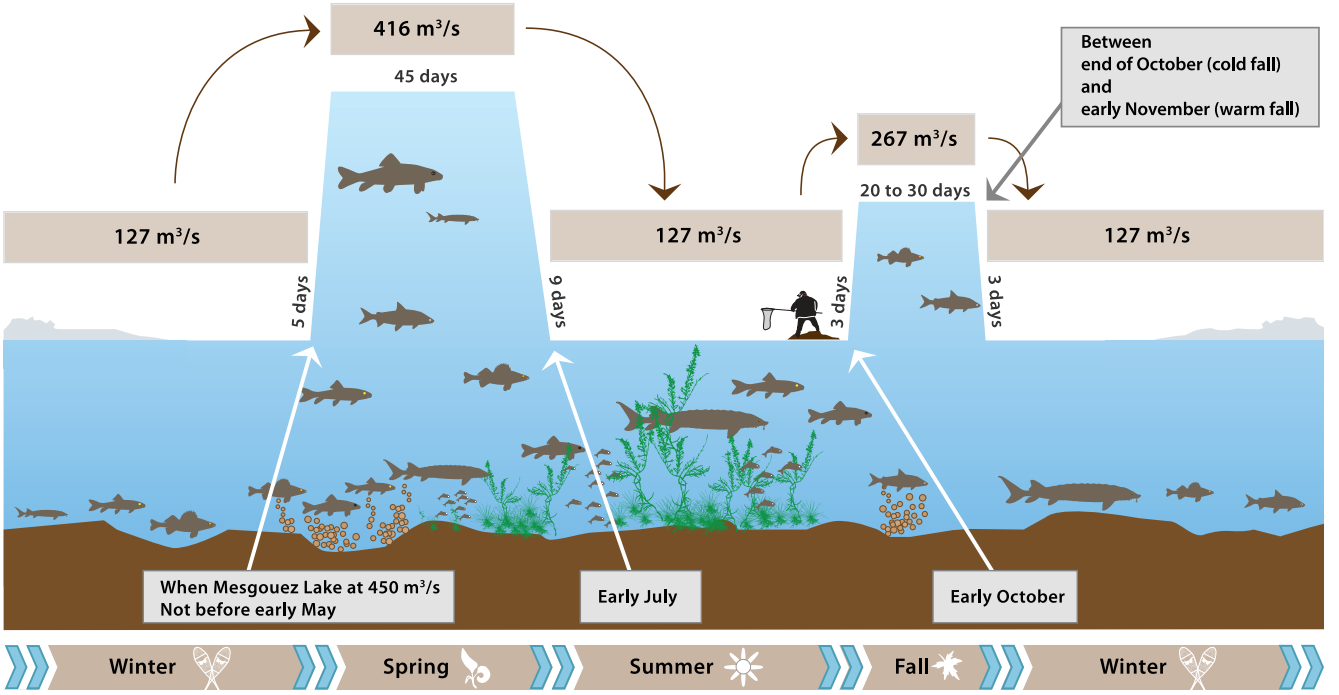

The Rupert River flows downstream of Rupert Dam. The amount of water released at Rupert Dam is increased in early May to support spring spawning.

An instream flow released year round through the spillway gates contributes to ensuring Hydro-Québec keeps its commitment to preserve fish habitat and the river's continued use for hunting, fishing, trapping and boating.

Rupert River Water Management Board

The Board oversees the respect of the Ecological Instream Flow regime. The Crees of Eeyou Istchee are represented on the Board by Mr. Lawrence Jimiken, from Nemaska, Mr. Thomas Hester, from Waskaganish and Mr. Brian Craik, representing the Grand Council of the Crees.

Hydlo and Friends is a radio show broadcast on JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke MacLeod and Luc Duquette, discuss the environmental follow-up activities related to the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project, as well as the concerns of land users with regard to Hydro-Québec's facilities and activities.

Next show:
Wednesday, May 13, at 8:00 a.m.

For more information, visit www.hydloandfriends.com

Whapmagoostui's financial pain

Report harshly criticizes overspending

by Joel Barde

An internal report on Eeyou Istchee's northernmost community is raising doubts about its approach to tackling a sizeable budget deficit. The Whapmagoostui audit draws a picture of a community that is redirecting Cree Nation Government funds to expensive capital projects that lack financial documentation.

Whapmagoostui Chief Stanley George, however, is critical of the report, saying it is not fair and accurate and that the CNG does not understand the unique and significant needs of his community.

The report is not the first of its kind. A March 2012 audit showed the community had a $5.2 million deficit and a cumulative deficit of $8.3 million.

To get the community's financial house in order, experts drew up a plan for the community to follow.

Despite following the plan at first, the band council went back to free-spending habits. This prompted Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to threaten Whapmagoostui with third-party management, an expensive process whereby outside number crunchers manage a community's budget.

To avoid that fate, the community agreed to another plan that would cut this year's deficit.

Despite progress, the report indicates the community still had a cash shortfall of $3.8 million last summer.

"Presently, we are very concerned that the measures to be implemented have not been addressed and that a series of other issues have also arisen or have not been resolved," wrote the report's authors, Yvan Gravel and Edward Ng.

Whapmagoostui Band Office

Recommendations

The report makes eight recommendations. These include addressing use of credit cards that were "recorded and reconciled irregularly," and passing bylaws to guard against conflicts of interest and shoddy bookkeeping.

One of the main recommendations is for the community to stop spending.

"Major concern is the continuing approval of unbudgeted expenditures… which will not allow WFN to meet its current obligations," says the report.

Bill Namagoose, GCC executive director, says the report shows where the "solutions" lie. "They were not following the budget," he said simply.

According to the report, CNG money from both The New Relationship Agreement and the Paix des Braves Agreement awarded to Whapmagoostui was earmarked for specific capital works projects.

The problem was that the money was being redirected to fund other initiatives.

Namagoose says that the CNG has now taken over management of those specific funds, to ensure that they are spent on the projects they are allocated for. According to the report those include a pumping station, a new water reservoir and a solid waste project.

"We don't manage the band. We just manage a few projects," he emphasized in a telephone interview.

The report also calls on the Whapmagoostui to end relations with a Montreal company called Les Roches du Nord. The company carried out a number of services in the community, including managing and running a restaurant, landscaping and renovating an old radio station.

The report says that over $1 million in Paix des Braves and Cree Nation Trust funds went to the company. Moreover, the report's authors state that Whapmagoostui

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could not provide them with contracts for the work, and that band council did not approve the work.

"It is imperative that all business ties with les Roches du Nord be severed immediately," said the report.

Chief George's Perspective

Chief Stanley George, elected in 2009, said his administration has worked closely with outside financial experts to clean up Whapmagoostui's finances.

George called it a challenging process, and he maintains that the report is inaccurate.

The band treasurer, he says, resigned prior to the audit. Neither the interim treasurer nor the director general were available to provide important information and documentation to the authors of the report.

Outstanding debt was already a major issue when George came to office. The windfall from the 2002 Paix des Braves had a lasting impact on the community's spending, he noted.

"I think in the past people thought the money would never stop after the Paix des Braves funding. We got a big substantial amount of money for 50 years. But two years after that we started experiencing cash flow shortages," said George.

George says that the community has halted its relationship with Les Roches du Nord and that lessons are being learned from the report. The community has adopted the recommended financial administration bylaw. And he wants to chart a new, positive future for the community.

"I will not say this person is guilty or who is at fault. As a traditional person, I hold that sacred. Whatever happened, it happened. We learned our mistakes. We've acted in the best interest of the community," said George.

Growing tension

According to the Chief, the Grand Council and the report's authors don't fully appreciate Whapmagoostui's unique challenges.

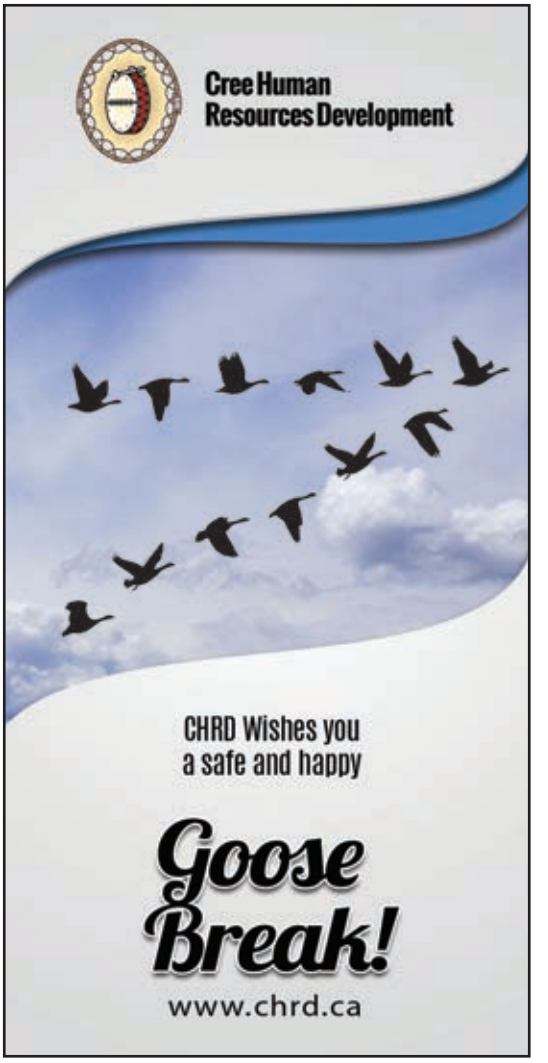
His community is facing a major housing crisis. In fact, he lives in his grandmother's home with two of his children because of a lack of housing.

Over $1.7 million went towards the construction of rent-to-own housing and maintenance of 17 other housing units, which had to be winterized and treated for mould.

There are also issues with alcoholism. Moreover, because of its remote location, essential goods – like groceries – are extremely expensive.

The money he receives for community housing is insufficient, George complained. He would like Cree officials to spend more time in his community to understand its needs.

"I'm walking around with restrictions. I'm like them to come visit. Look at our reality. Being the most northern community, we always get the short end of the stick."



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"A goose for Mother"

by Ron Sheshamush

The blued-steel trigger releases the firing pin. It strikes and dents the brass primer, which ignites a priming compound of nitrogen. The compound rapidly expands. It forces the lead shot out of the plastic wad, which seals propellant gases and separates the powder –out a hull marked Nitro Magnum. The shot travels down a 12-gauge barrel at tremendous speed as the explosion kicks the barrel against my left shoulder. The shot disperses horizontally and downward as gravity acts on it at 9.8 metres per second squared. Then they initially strike the grey, exterior feathers on the breast, followed by the soft greyish down, before penetrating the thick fat and ripping through the meat and vital organs of a lone gander – the Canada goose.

This is the anatomical play-by-play of my weapon of choice and today's successful goose hunt on the east coast of Hudson Bay.

Our precious daughter, Lea-Faye Sheshamush, was born just 12 days ago. In three days it will be Mother's Day. I am anxious to harvest a Canada goose to feast on that special day since it is my fiancée's first child. I want it to be special.

It is Friday evening, south of the river. A band of local Inuit appear from behind the long, grey, granite finger of land of Whapmagoostui with their Ski-Doos. They are returning home from a day's goose hunt. The sea ice, blueish in colour because of the salt water, is still thick enough for safe travel. It is murky and relatively cold. Stratus clouds cover the entire region and gradually drift eastward. I positioned my blind here on the sandy point north of the river this afternoon in hopes of catching my first goose of the year.

From time to time I see a flock of Canada geese flying north. They form a thin, wavy line in the distance, and a V-shaped formation while overhead. As soon as they pass the land they descend and fly low over the ice, sometimes skimming the sea ice. The sound of geese honking in the sky is music to my aging ears. It is beautiful.

In my blind I pray, "Heavenly Father, I thank you for giving me and Farrah this precious child. Mother's Day is a special day. If it's not too much to ask, I am asking for one goose. Just one goose. For it is Farrah's first child. I want it to be special. Amen."

No luck today.

Saturday. Snowflakes gently eddy down from the heavens. The weather hasn't changed much since yesterday except for the occasional flurries. I grab my Nikon binoculars and scan the land and sea for any signs of birds. A few ringed seals can be seen out on the ice resting by their breathing holes. It is not long before a flock of five geese appear from the south point in the far distance. They are skimming the sea ice and, since the earth is round, they disappear to the north in the vast ice.

Then, what to my wandering eye should appear, but a lone Canada goose coming in from the west at a high altitude. I do not even have a chance to blow my goose call because the bird is already attracted by my old and dirty, garbage-salvaged polyurethane decoys. I watch it as it locks its wings, extends the landing gear and glides in for a perfect landing, clucking to his fake friends.

At roughly 60 yards away, just before touch down, I pull the trigger. The shotgun blast echoes across the river. The white-chin strapped bird is dead. I am ecstatic. I am delighted to have a goose for Mother's Day supper.

My Father in Heaven has answered my prayer. Ask, and it shall be given you – Matthew 7:7. For it is not the big things in this world that matter the most, for it is the small things that make a difference.

Surely, we feasted on a fine, tender-juicy, fresh goose on Sunday evening.

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers. Have a safe and successful goose hunt everyone!

Moving heaven and earth

Inuit construction company "Kong-struction" is ready to start beating its chest

by Lyle Stewart

The annual Kuujjuaq Mining Workshop this year will be a coming-out of sorts for a fledgling construction company based in Kangirsuk, a tiny Inuit community (population 300) on the Bay of Ungava.

Kong-struction is less than two years old, but the largely Inuk-operated firm has made huge strides toward becoming a player in the booming construction industry in northern Quebec. When company representatives appear at the Kuujjuaq conference April 28-30, they'll tell a seemingly unlikely story of building a thriving business out of scrapped vehicles, determination, a philosophy of mutual support and a lot of elbow grease.

It's the brainchild of Robert Jr. Drapeau, a 30-year construction industry veteran who is familiar to many Cree who worked with him and the company, Construction Val-d'Or, founded by his late father, Robert Sr.

"It started coming together when I was working in Kangirsuk in the summer of 2012," Drapeau recounts. "I went up there and started teaching construction to local people. It worked well. People who had never worked on heavy machinery were showing up on time every morning. They really wanted to accomplish something."

Drapeau noticed a collection of broken-down equipment rusting away in the local dumpsite. He negotiated with the community to purchase four pieces of discarded equipment and put people to work putting the pieces back together. The first truck had to be dug out of deep snow bank.

"It was all torn to shreds," Drapeau laughs. "But I saw a great opportunity to take them apart and teach mechanics; how to rebuild and properly maintain them."

They brought an abandoned engine back to life, ordered replacement brakes and a windshield, then painted and modified the hood of a school bus to fit the first company truck. It took months of hard work and hundreds of hours of labour to make it professionally operational.

Drapeau credits Alexis Bado, a program officer with the Sustainable Employment Department of the Kativik Regional Government, with providing training subsidies to sustain the project until it could get on its feet.

Two years later, Kong-struction employs 12 Inuk, from teenagers to one worker who is in his 70s. The company operates a variety of heavy machinery, from dump trucks to loaders to large excavators. This winter, Drapeau and another Kong-struction employee came south to a Ritchie Bros. auction in Valleyfield, where they bought a compacter and three more dump trucks. They're waiting for the ice to melt so the new equipment can be barged north to Kangirsuk – at a cost of $86,000.

Meanwhile, those who work at the company have become the toast of the town as they've begun to win contracts for a variety of projects, including road works, excavation, crushing, and transportation, drilling and blasting. Now they have their sights on bigger goals, including jobs at the nearby Raglan Mine.

For Drapeau, creating a local company that employs and trains local people is an important goal. "I've seen many southern companies bring a lot of people in and not hire any local Inuit people. Or if they did, only to do the most menial jobs like picking up scrap materials. I didn't appreciate that. So that's why we're trying to turn this in another direction."

But what really makes the company special is a philosophy of collective support based on family values. Davidee Nassak is a prime example. The 18-year-old is, since January, enrolled in a business program at Montreal's John Abbott College. But he started working with Kong-struction more than two years ago, learning how to operate all kinds of heavy machinery.

The family atmosphere is more than a simple comfort zone for the tight-knit Inuk who work at the company. As Nassak explains, each workday starts with a security meeting.

"It's part of our daily routine. We talk about the mistakes we made the day before, that we would normally be too shy to tell. For example, if I overloaded the truck with gravel. Or mistook hydraulic oil for engine oil. We communicate. At first we all laugh together – not at each other – because we feel like family. We're like brothers and sisters in the shop," says Nassak.

"Then we'll offer advice on how to avoid the mistake. We're not afraid to ask any question. There's no such thing as a wrong question."

Nassak is a voluble teenager, cracking jokes and constantly checking his Facebook on his smartphone. But he's deadly serious about developing Kong-struction as an important economic force for his hometown. That's why he's in Montreal, studying hard.

"I want to learn about the business side, to be able to do the paperwork," he explains. "It's a lot

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

The Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government is entering a new era in terms of governance between the Cree and Jamesians on the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory. This organization has authority on matters of municipal administration, economic development and natural resources development in Category III lands of Northern Quebec.

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- Provide recommendations and purchase computer or technical equipment according to the purchasing policy;
- Ensure the implementation and sound operation of computers, IP telephone service, cell phones, printers, Wi-Fi systems, security copy system and all other network equipment;
- Ensure the update, preparation, configuration and installation of the workstations and email addresses;
- Prepare user instructions for software and applications and offer training to users;
- Support the users of the "Paperless interface" on site during meetings of Council;
- Provide the technical co-ordination for the meetings of the towns and localities and ensure the compliance with the technological needs for the meetings;
- Provide support for the development and update of the Internet site and the Intranet, including the development of a process for responding to online requests;
- Other related duties.

REQUIREMENTS AND SKILLS

- College degree in computer technology;
- Three (3) to five (5) years of experience in a similar position;
- Good knowledge of content management systems, network operation systems, local and wide area networks, Microsoft Office Suite products, IP telephone service, Internet site management and update, paperless interface software;
- Demonstrate tact, diplomacy, discretion and leadership skills;
- Good organizational skills, reliability and punctuality;
- Capacity for analyzing and solving problems;
- Ability to work in remote areas and in a multi-cultural environment;
- Fluency in French and English is essential;
- Work well as part of a team.

You may apply for this position by April 24, 2015

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110 Matagami Boulevard, P.O. Box 500
Matagami, QC J0Y 2A0

lfavreau@greibj-eijbrg.ca

> **"At first we all laugh together – not at each other – because we feel like family. We're like brothers and sisters in the shop."**

18-year-old Davidee Nassak

of work. But Bob is not going to be here forever and we will need to do this for ourselves. So I thought if I got into business he wouldn't be the only pulling all the weight."

Drapeau changed Nassak's opinion of white southerners the first time he met him for a job interview as a shy 16-year-old. Waiting in a chair for his interview, Nassak saw Drapeau walking down the hall concentrating on reading a file. "I thought, 'Oh, here comes another super serious white guy!'"

But he was wrong. "Sometimes Bob is like my second mother," says Nassak. "He talked to me after work when I started. I was scared at first but it became easier and I gained confidence. Now I can do it alone. He tested me and showed confidence in me."

Drapeau is a grizzled veteran of job sites across the north, but he's also a man who wears his heart on his sleeve. Meeting for lunch with him and Nassak in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue recently, he was beaming with pride at the progress of his young protégé.

Drapeau says the Kuujjuaq conference will be an important event in the lives of men and women at Kong-struction. "The dream of the Inuit is to go out there and say, 'We can do this.' And by doing this, we create more opportunities," he says.

"Davidee used to never leave his bedroom," he confides. "He was a shy person, closed up. Now he's in school, never late, and passing with good grades. He recently went to New York. He's out there. And he's going back to his remote community explaining what he is seeing."

The personal growth of the company's workers is a vital element of making the new company work, Drapeau emphasizes. "We use every opportunities to teach one another. That's why we are a family. We learn to respect the rules, and we come into work on time. That's our philosophy: learn one, do one, teach one."

It's a way of business he learned working with his father at Construction Val-d'Or, a large company with at times up to 250 employees. "We had an idea of working up north, my dad worked all his life in Cree territory," Drapeau explains. "So I started working and teaching Cree people, sharing my knowledge. We created many opportunities for Cree to learn and operate with us. Now some have their own businesses."

And it's working in Kangirsuk, he insists with a fervour that suggests bigger things are just over the horizon. As Drapeau quips, "We 'Kong' do it!"

by Amy German

Healthy teeth, healthy life

Keep those tiny teeth shining for a brighter future

As April is oral health month on the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay's calendar, Cree children in all nine communities have been asked to "drop the pop," for their health and for their teeth.

Why is this so important?

According to Evelyne Lefebvre, team leader for the CBHSSJB's fleet of dental hygienists, when the Board last looked at data in the early 2000s on tooth decay among schoolchildren, 98% of Cree children had tooth decay by the age of seven.

While data has not been released, Lefebvre said a new survey was conducted throughout the province in 2012 and 2013 among students in Grades 2 and 6.

She expects improvement in the numbers though rates of tooth decay likely remain high due to consumption of sugary snacks, sweets and beverages.

"There is a lack of tooth brushing and these things together are the problem," Lefebvre added. "To create a cavity you need germs in the mouth, we all have germs in our mouths; this is part of the body. But, every time you eat something sugary, like cake, cookies or even milk where (lactose) or fruits sugar naturally occurs, these germs are fed, transforming these germs into an acid. Once this acid is on the tooth, as it is very strong, it starts to dissolve the tooth, little by little, and this is tooth decay."

Lefebvre said that skipping brushing for a day likely wouldn't be the kind of thing that could form a cavity overnight but brushing frequently is necessary to prevent acid formation.

Lefebvre said that research has shown that brushing teeth twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride can reduce tooth decay by up to 40%.

As some people's saliva tends to be more acidic than others, Lefebvre said that frequent brushing is necessary to ensure healthy teeth throughout your life.

Lefebvre said that forming good brushing habits while children are young is absolutely necessary. This involves brushing teeth for them while they are too young to do it themselves and then supervision to ensure they get the job done twice a day.

"Up to the age of 10, parents should not only supervise tooth brushing but also take the toothbrush when they are done to brush the teeth again, especially in the back to make sure that teeth are clean of germs," said Lefebvre.

Lefebvre suggested a number of techniques that parents can use to make sure that those teeth get cleaned.

Lefebvre said a three-year-old child can learn how to brush their own teeth but they may not have enough dexterity to get the job done right.

"They can brush their front teeth very well and may even try to eat the toothpaste at this age and so don't use too much and always make tooth brushing part of the going-to-bed routine. You can try to make it part of a fun game. Use a timer or use a brush that plays music and have the child brush until the music stops. Sometimes you can even find toothbrushes with lights. Any way you can make it a fun activity is great," said Lefebvre.

Lefebvre also suggested that tooth brushing be done as a family activity. As even babies cutting their first teeth are vulnerable to tooth decay, Lefebvre said it is important to start brushing as soon as new teeth arrive because in a baby tooth decay can spread very rapidly, particularly as babies are often left with bottles to drink as they fall asleep.

The biggest problem is that most people are not conscious of the amount of sugar they consume.

"When you look at a product label that tells you how much sugar is in what you are eating, most people won't equate the grams listed for how many cubes or teaspoons of sugar that actually is. There is sugar in almost everything that we eat," said Lefebvre.

This is why she said that campaigns like Drop the Pop are absolutely necessary; to get people to understand that there are about 12 teaspoons of sugar inside a small can of Orange Crush. Even juices contain a lot of sugar.

"Most juice is only supposed to be served as a maximum half a cup per day, which is a very small quantity compared to what we actually drink. Also, there is no fibre in juice (because it has been separated from the fruit) and normally it has been made from concentrate so there is more sugar than in just the fruit. It is better to just have a little bit. So, if you want something sweet just eat the fruit because there is more fibre and more vitamins," said Lefebvre.

When thirsty, it is far better to drink water, as this will cleanse the body. Milk is also a better alternative that will help produce strong teeth and bones, particularly for growing children.

If you are going to choose juice, it is important to read the labels to avoid what she calls "fake juice," which is anything labeled anything labeled a "drink, cocktail, punch or beverage." These products will often have as much sugar as pop.

"The amount of sugar in these drinks will just stick to your teeth and so it can be a big feast for the germs that will then transform into an acid that can create cavities," said Lefebvre. "For this reason, she said that it is particularly important that babies are not given juice in their baby bottles, particularly in the crib."

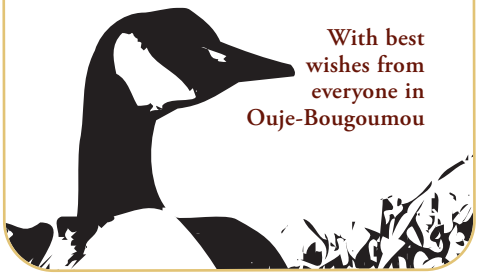
While a baby may only have a few teeth, all it takes is a little bit of sugar to start forming a cavity.

For more information preventing tooth decay, contact your local dental hygienist or dentist.

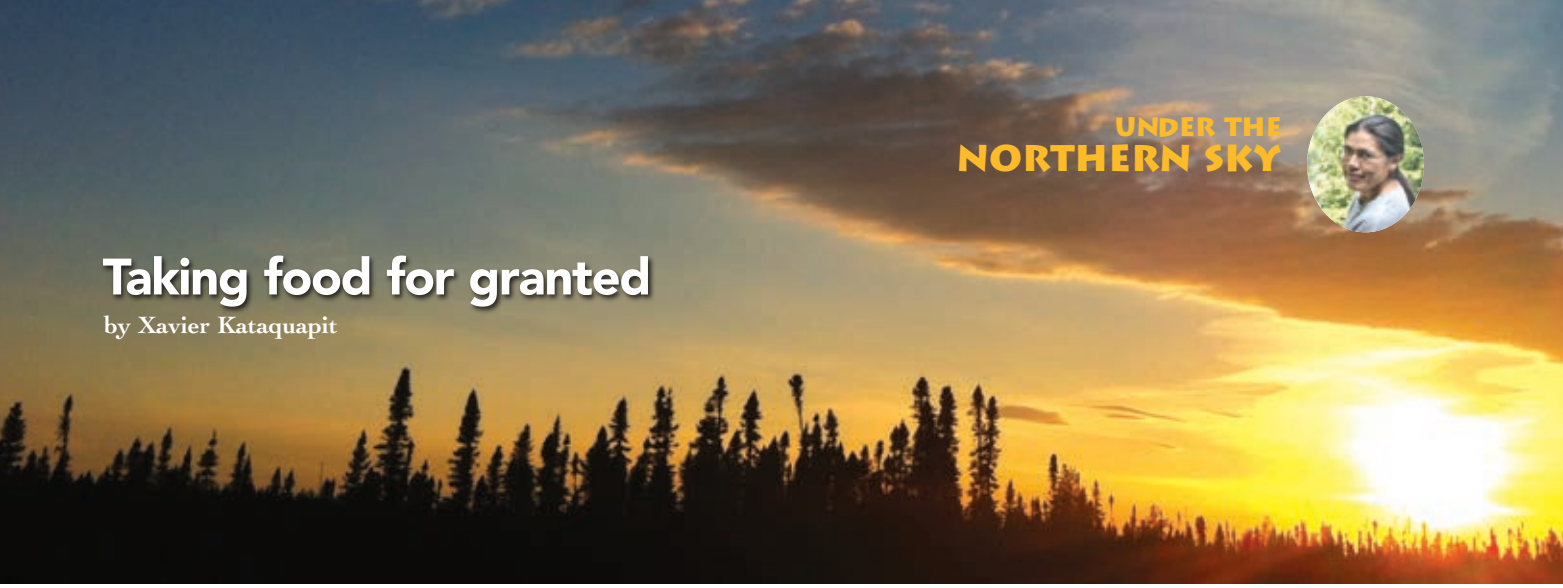
The community of Ouje-Bougoumou extends its best wishes to the entire Cree Nation for an enjoyable, and above all else, a safe Goose hunt.

May the upcoming annual hunt be an opportunity for us to renew our ties with the land and with our cultural traditions. Let us keep in mind that this is also an opportunity for us to reconnect with the fundamental Cree values of sharing, caring and respect so that they will be with us and guide us throughout the year.

With the recent tragedy in Mistissini so uppermost in our minds and in our hearts may we all be especially aware of the need to take the extra steps to keep everyone around us protected from any possible danger or harm.



With best wishes from everyone in Ouje-Bougoumou



UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Taking food for granted

by Xavier Kataquapit

When is the last time you remember being hungry – and I mean really hungry – with nothing or very little to eat? I can recall often being hungry when I was young back home in Attawapiskat. We had a large family, food was costly because it had to be shipped up to our remote community and there was not much work in the community. Thankfully, most of the parents and older people back then were still very active on the land and we survived the lean periods with traditional meals of Niska (Canada goose), Nah-mes (fish), Atik (caribou, moose), as well as other animals and birds.

I remember watching televised images of modern families in big, comfy homes eating large meals. I realized that there was another world out there where people seemed to have everything. In my world none of our houses had running water. We had to use outhouses all year round and that was very difficult when it was -40° in the middle of winter.

Of course, we had what was known as a honey bucket for the older folk and little ones so that they would not have to venture out to the outhouse in bad weather. We had to fetch our water from the river in buckets, which we would boil mostly for tea. Amazingly, all of this was happening in the 1990s while everyone else in Canada had been enjoying modern conveniences for many decades.

When I first ventured to cities in the south – like Timmins, North Bay, Ottawa and Toronto – I was amazed at how well everyone lived. The south seemed luxurious. I was amazed that I could easily purchase a lot of food at cheap prices and I could have a meal at a restaurant whenever I felt hungry. It was like a trip to heaven.

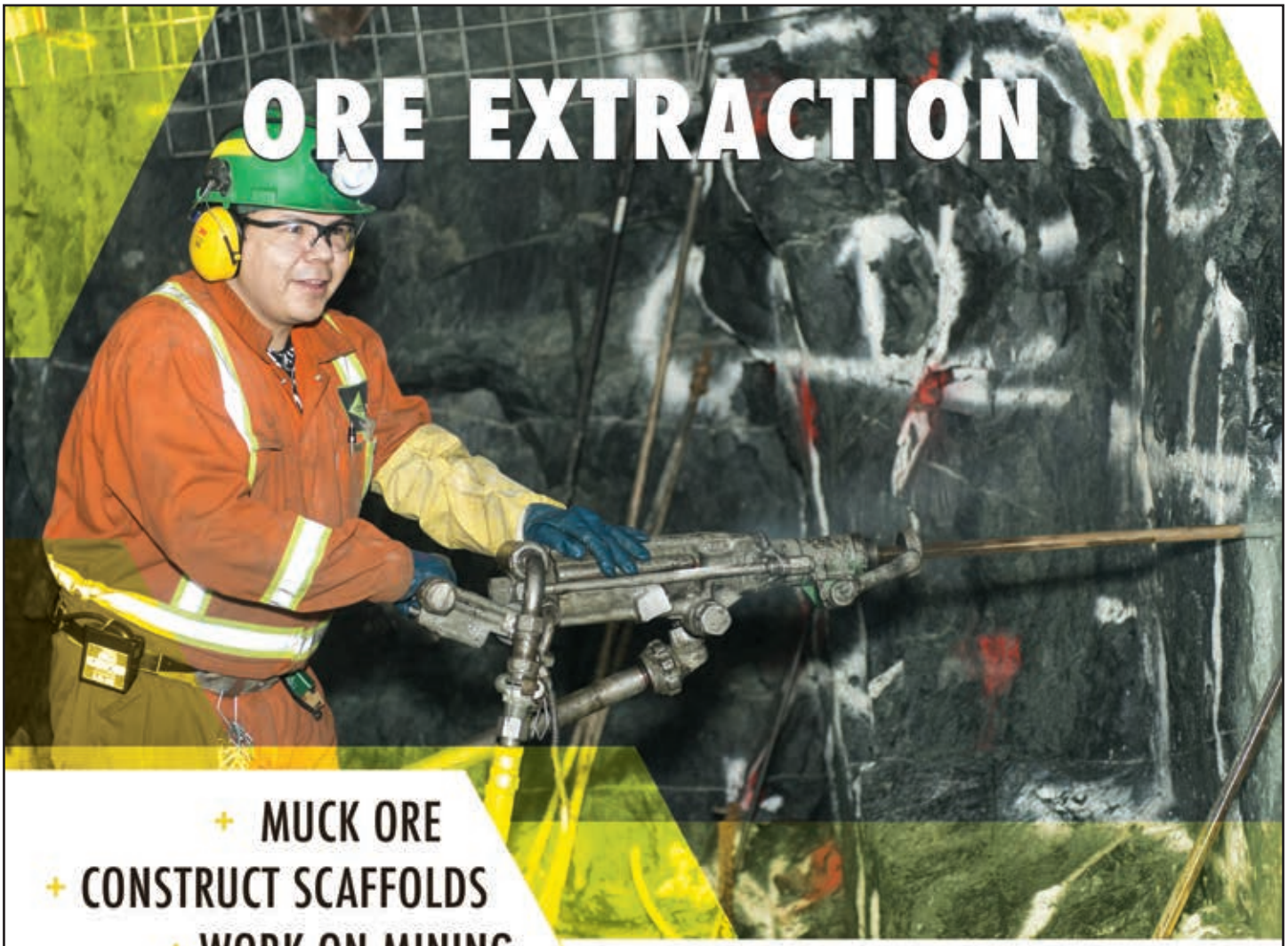
In my early 20s I moved south and stayed in towns and cities where soon I took for granted all of those things I once missed so much. For most of my teen years I had always been skinny and as I was very active and there wasn't that much food around anyway. Suddenly I was gaining weight. I noticed that many people in the southern towns and cities were overweight and I soon learned that many were suffering from diabetes and heart conditions largely due to inactive lifestyles and poor diets. For the first time in my life I found myself having to cut back on my eating. I had long dreamed of being in the land of plenty. Now that I had arrived I found that things were not so easy.

We have so much here in Canada. We have good, clean water to drink and most of us have access to as much food as we want to eat. However, there are still children who wake up hungry in this country and head off to school on an empty stomach. There are families that must struggle to keep themselves fed. In many First Nations across the country safe, high-quality drinking water is still not a reality and store-bought food is extremely expensive. Still, in Canada we are generally better off than most other countries in the world.

When I traveled through Asia recently I saw so much poverty. Many times I noticed that people did not have access to clean drinking water. I watched as children hauled large containers of water from dirty-looking rivers and lakes. Many times I came across families bathing in rivers, lakes and even the ocean, as they had no running water at home. I came across many people, young and old, begging for food. All of this made me so sad that I just wanted to fly away from it all and return to Canada. However, I did my very best to try to adapt to much of the misery I witnessed and happily I was rewarded in meeting many people from different cultures who made me feel comfortable most of the time with their kindness.

I lost a few pounds on my travels through Asia and once in a while I actually was hungry. For the first time in years there were days when I was hiking in areas where I just could not get a tasty meal and my stomach growled with hunger. This was a feeling that I had not had for many years and it reminded me of just how lucky I am to live in a country where people are not starving to death or becoming fatally sick because of contaminated drinking water. We owe it to everyone else on this planet to work towards a day when they can have the same luxury of enough food to eat and clean water to drink.

ORE EXTRACTION



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